

Community Conversation

Twickenham Riverside, South Twickenham, St Margarets and North Twickenham

Date: 14th March 2024

Time: 7.00pm – 9:00pm

Venue: Clarendon Hall, York House, Twickenham

AGENDA:

6.30pm – 7.00pm:	Refreshments and Council departmental stall on local issues (including Civic Pride/Community Fund, Community Safety)
7.00pm – 7.10pm:	Introduction to the event (Chair)
7.10pm – 7.20pm:	Review of achievements per ward - Councillors
7.20pm – 8.10pm:	Priority themes discussion (including comments, observations and questions from the audience)
8.10pm – 8.50pm:	Open questions and comments
8.50pm - 9.00pm:	Event close

Ward members in attendance:

- Cllr Michael Butlin
- Cllr James Chard
- Cllr Alexander Ehmann
- Cllr Ben Khosa
- Cllr Rhi Lee
- Cllr Katie Mansfield
- Cllr Julia Neden-Watts
- Cllr Stephen O'Shea

Apologies

- Cllr Richard Bennett

Agenda Item One: Update from Councillors

Ward Achievements

Councillor	Achievements
Twickenham Riverside (Cllr Chard)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress on Development: Councillor Chard provided updates on the completion of the planning process for the old Wharf Side area, emphasising the transformative development plans supported by an independent planning inspector. This development aims to bring high-quality changes with widespread public benefits. Additionally, procurement and construction services are underway. • Infrastructure Improvements: Updates were given on road resurfacing projects along Richmond Road and Sandycombe Road, highlighting the dependency on Transport for London (TfL) grants for such initiatives. Pavement improvements and the installation of a zebra crossing in Arragon Road were also discussed. • Community Initiatives: Councillor Chard mentioned the renewal of Discover Twickenham for another five years, highlighting collaboration with local businesses. Other initiatives such as making Cambridge Gardens more accessible and enhancing CCTV coverage in Church Street were highlighted. • Environmental Efforts: The introduction of the Library of Things in Patch and the installation of a recycling bin for electrical items on Heath Road were also mentioned.
South Twickenham (Cllr Lee)	<p>Improving Safety and Infrastructure: Councillor Lee reported on various initiatives aimed at enhancing safety and infrastructure in South Twickenham, including consideration of improved lighting on Twickenham Green, to help address safety concerns for residents during the winter months. Additionally, plans for a residential development at Greggs were highlighted, with 116 new homes planned, 50% of which are affordable, contributing to addressing housing needs in the area. <i>Post Meeting Note from the Council: Officers are looking into the request for lighting and how this would be provided, with proposals subject to consultation. Capital funding has been earmarked should a project proceed.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Engagement and Crime Prevention: Efforts to engage with the community and address concerns were evident, particularly regarding the commemoration of Annie De La Grange and the provision of affordable housing. Councillor Lee emphasised the importance of collaboration with residents in reporting graffiti and addressing anti-social behaviour promptly, demonstrating an initiative-taking approach to community safety. • Infrastructure and Environmental Initiatives: Infrastructure improvements, such as the installation of a new recycling bin for electrical items and the upcoming mega skip day, were highlighted as part of ongoing efforts to enhance sustainability and cleanliness in the area. The

	council's responsiveness to concerns about public facilities, such as the provision of toilet facilities in Radnor Gardens, further underscored a commitment to meeting the needs of residents.
St Margarets and North Twickenham (Cllr Khosa)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing Long-standing Issues: Councillor Khosa provided updates on longstanding issues, particularly regarding Moormead Pavilion. Efforts were highlighted, including collaboration with the community to move the project forward and secure funding. The council's contribution of £150k towards advancing the project displayed commitment to resolving long-standing issues in the area. • Community Engagement and Opposition: Plans were outlined for further community engagement, including fundraising efforts by a community group. Concerns were raised regarding Thames Water Abstraction Plans, with the council adamantly opposing the scheme due to its potential negative impact on Moormead Park. Plans for modernizing infrastructure and collaboration with the RFU were also discussed, underscoring initiative-taking measures to address community concerns and improve the area's overall quality of life.

Agenda item two:

Theme 1	Discussion
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**Thames Water/Teddington
Direct River Abstraction
Proposal****Cllr Neden-Watts Introduction:**

- Plan proposed due to acknowledgment of challenge in supplying drinking water to London in times of drought.
- Proposing to build an abstraction point upstream of Teddington Weir to take more water out of the Thames along existing Lee Valley Tunnel, and to build a new pipeline from Mogden Sewage Works to put treated effluence into Thames to maintain flow of water over Teddington Weir.
- Construction shafts proposed in various locations including Moormead Park – worried about impact on Moormead Park, the river use, and ecology as well as the environment in Ham Lands across the river. Residents anxious about tunnelling under properties.
- The Council finds the proposals very patchy in the context of Becton desalination plant which is being unused after huge investment - Thames Water have variable levels of investment in infrastructure and their 'best-value' approach.
- Unresolved matters of raw sewage entering the Thames upstream of the abstraction point, bringing into doubt the quality of the water in that area; this issue is yet to be addressed.
- Question marks on whether the scheme can realistically deliver what is needed in times of drought.
- Council would prefer more urgent consideration and better use of reservoirs, water management, fixing leaks, and reducing wastage. Do need to prepare ourselves for the process ahead.
- Secretary of State has stated the proposals will be assessed under a Development Consent Order, effectively bypassing local authorities as decision-makers – the Council still, however, has a statutory role in the process.
- Officers from Parks, Highways, Conservation, and Ecology Teams will be applying their expertise and submitting impact assessments on the proposals, once the designs are clear. Will appoint consultants if necessary to supplement that knowledge.
- Updating website with more information at the right time to keep communities informed. Will be staying connected with Save our Landlords and Rivers Solar who are an umbrella group of organizations/residents concerned about the proposals. Will also be talking to Kingston and Hounslow Boroughs to align positions.

Questions:

1. **St Margaret's resident:** Some might remember another scheme about a pipe coming down from Scotland to give Southern England water. With this scheme was horrified when first heard about it: 10m pipe coming through Thames fluvial plain which shifts a lot of bedrock and between houses. How will the subsidence work? This is also a tributary of the Thames they are diverting; 10m volume of water. Thames Water has a poor, illegal record in fixing 9-inch pipes let along 10m wide. If that bursts, which is a possibility, will Thames Water take a few days to fix it and how will it work? A lot of things could be affected. Cost in keeping it working is huge. Completely bonkers.
2. **St Margaret's resident: What legal basis does the Council have for objecting to a national scheme like this? Are they able to use planning law on their own side or just a representative for residents?**
 - **Cllr Neden-Watts Response:** Have more than one hat as a Council and colleague from St Margarets will want to give a local view. Cllr Neden-Watts is portfolio holder for Environment so taking the lead on this. Planning also comes under the environment. Local Councillors will be protesting, but Council will still have a statutory role to play. Officers will compile reports to make our point. Already setting the groundwork for appealing via steering group including senior officers and councillors, consulting with other Councils and groups, so taking this issue seriously.
 - **Cllr Mansfield Response:** Ward councillors on the side of the community in St Margarets. Going to be difficult for everybody and dreadful for Moormead Park. Does not stop ward councillors representing the community, and they are on the side of the community.
 - **Cllr Ehmman Response:** The Council as landowner has been able to resist Thames Water by refusing digging and preliminary analysis of the site. Will continue to demonstrate opposition to the scheme.
3. **Comment:** The scheme is for private profit from public funds, should be seen as that. In terms of decision process, could councillors give some indication of the timeline for forthcoming change of government, and would the Labour government (if in power) take a different view than the current Secretary of State, who seems to have taken power away from local people and councils?

- **Cllr Neden-Watts Response:** Timeline of works – looking at further public consultation in Winter 2024, preparing a planning application up to 2026. Application will be assessed 2026-27, construction works proposed to start in 2029 until 2033.
- **Cllr Ehmann Response:** Encourage all residents to work hard on Labour reps – Labour reps not in the borough have been less than vociferous about the scheme as Lib Dems, so could be weak on this scheme.

4. **Solar campaign group (Teddington):** On the timescale, there was a long gap between planning consent being fulfilled and starting to build (TW built in a one-year assumption for a judicial review, subject to this). Crucial that people sign a petition to display local opposition. In Isleworth Labour are less concerned about this scheme but important to bring them on side. Anyone with the opportunity to point them our way then please do. Pleased to hear Council will work across Councils to have an aligned position.

5. **St Margaret's resident Supplementary):** Wretched proposal. Think there will be a change in government and should be brought to Cllr Salman Shahin in Isleworth, will be speaking to him in the next few days. Already raised £5k to fight against the scheme – not a lot of promotion around it yet. If following online, please search Save our Lands and River and donate.

Theme 2

Discussion

<p>Community Safety</p>	<p>Introduction by Cllr Mansfield:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlighted the borough's lower crime rates compared to the Richmond average. • Addressed prevalent issues such as increased burglaries and bike thefts. • Emphasised the council's close collaboration with the police to tackle these issues effectively. • Mentioned the police's bike marking programme aimed at reducing bike thefts. • Discussed the community engagement approach in response to spates of burglaries. <p>Questions and Responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St Margaret's resident: Detailed an attempted mugging and card scam near Richmond Theatre and Green. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Response:</i> Council committed to addressing town centre safety challenges, particularly in Richmond. • <i>Cllr Butlin:</i> Stress on the importance of reporting incidents to facilitate police resource allocation. • <i>Police Officer:</i> Urged reporting of fraud incidents targeting individuals near payment machines and highlighted ongoing police efforts to address such crimes. • <i>Cllr Ehmman:</i> Mentioned Council communication efforts and changes in payment methods to combat fraud. <p>Key Points: The discussion underscored the collaborative efforts between the council, police, and community to address safety concerns. It highlighted strategies to combat specific crimes like burglaries, bike thefts, and mugging offences. The importance of reporting incidents for effective police response was emphasised alongside measures to tackle fraud activities.</p>
<p>Theme 3</p>	<p>Discussion</p>

Town Centre Vitality**Introduction by Cllr O'Shea:**

- Cllr O'Shea highlighted the thriving town centres in Richmond and ongoing efforts to enhance liveability.
- Mentioned the resurfacing work in Twickenham Riverside and East Twickenham, aimed at improving the area's appeal.
- Emphasised ongoing consultations in Richmond Town Centre with potential benefits for other areas.
- Acknowledged business initiatives such as Twickenham BID's events, contributing to a thriving business community.

Questions and Responses:

- **Twickenham Riverside Development:**

- *Resident Question:* Concerns about Twickenham's congestion and suggestion to utilize the Riverside area as a town square.
- *Cllr O'Shea's Response:* Emphasised the Riverside's importance and plans for events space, despite challenges with the main road.

- **Youth Engagement in South Twickenham:**

- *Resident Question:* Concern about the lack of constructive activities for young adults in South Twickenham, apart from commercial venues.
- *Cllr Neden-Watts's Response:* Highlighted efforts to improve sports facilities and explore additional activities in major centres.

- **Accessibility and Pavement Conditions:**

- *Resident Question:* Inquiry about improving accessibility in Twickenham, including addressing hazards like A-Boards and poor pavements.
- *Cllr Ehmman's Response:* Encouraged reporting pavement issues and assured action on A-Board violations through street scene enforcement.

	<p>Key Points: The discussion focused on enhancing town centres' vitality, engaging the community, and addressing accessibility issues. Suggestions were made to maximize the potential of spaces like Twickenham Riverside for public events and cultural activities. Additionally, concerns about youth engagement and accessibility were acknowledged, with efforts underway to address these issues effectively.</p>
<p>Theme 4</p>	<p>Discussion</p>
<p>Transportation and Sustainable Travel</p>	<p>Introduction by Cllr Ehmann:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlighted various transportation initiatives and ongoing works in South Twickenham, including road resurfacing and proposals for school streets and pedestrian improvements. • Mentioned scoping work for Cross Deep improvements, Twickenham Riverside's school street scheme, and the broader plan for Twickenham Centre's transport reconfiguration. • Addressed recent changes in St Margarets village and broader borough-wide plans for transportation needs under "Transport 2050." <p>Questions and Responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving Cycling Amenities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Resident Question:</i> Suggested improving cycle lanes on major roads like Heath Road/ King Street/ Richmond Street for sustainable transportation. • <i>Cllr Ehmann's Response:</i> Acknowledged the feedback and indicated consideration as part of the Twickenham town centre review. • Concerns about Traffic and Rat Runs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>South Twickenham Resident Question:</i> Raised concerns about local rat runs and the lack of response from authorities despite previous communications. • <i>Cllr Ehmann's Response:</i> Explained the criteria for large traffic reduction schemes and the need for overwhelming resident support. • <i>Cllr Butlin's Response:</i> Discussed the challenges of controlling rat runs and the importance of understanding community preferences. • <i>Additional Comments:</i> Highlighted the need for careful consideration and investment in infrastructure to address traffic issues effectively. • Challenges with Cross Deep and School Traffic: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>South Twickenham Resident Question:</i> Highlighted issues with large vehicles and school traffic on Cross Deep. • <i>Cllr Ehmann's Response:</i> Acknowledged the challenges and mentioned efforts to reduce car journeys to schools in the area.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Police Officer's Response:</i> Noted the enforcement efforts and potential for speed operations to address safety concerns. • Concerns about Bus Route Changes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Hampton North Resident Question:</i> Inquired about the restoration of normal bus routes for R68 and R70. • <i>Cllr Mansfield's Response:</i> Indicated discussions with the bus company and expected return to normal routes soon. • <i>Cllr Neden-Watts's Response:</i> Recognized the importance of the routes and efforts made to address concerns with TfL. • <i>Additional Comment:</i> Raised concerns about delayed changes to bus stop signs causing confusion among commuters. • Safety Issues with Cycling Infrastructure and Non-Pedal Bikes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>South Twickenham Resident Question:</i> Raised concerns about the usability and safety of cycle lanes on Staines Road, as well as issues with e-scooters and non-pedal bikes. • <i>Cllr Ehmann's Response:</i> Discussed ongoing investigations and consultations regarding cycle lanes and emphasized the need for safer road networks for cyclists and pedestrians. • <i>Police Officer's Response:</i> Acknowledged the illegality of power-assisted e-bikes and expressed commitment to enforcement. • <i>Cllr Ehmann's Response:</i> Highlighted the challenges of enforcement and the importance of addressing safety concerns. <p>Key Points: The discussion focused on addressing various transportation challenges, including improving cycling amenities, addressing traffic issues, restoring bus routes, and ensuring safety on the roads for all road users. Residents' concerns were acknowledged, with efforts made to address them through ongoing consultations and infrastructure improvements.</p>
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Agenda Item Three: Open Floor Questions

Headline Topic: Improving Accessibility in Church Street

- **Responses:**

- Cllr Chard acknowledged the challenges in Church Street due to its historic nature. Collaborating with traders to address accessibility issues.
- Cllr Ehmann suggested that traders could extend their services outside their shops, benefiting from pedestrianization to create more accessible spaces.

Post meeting note from the Council: Retail and businesses would require a special license to trade outside their premises, and there would also be staffing implications which is a large expense for business. There are also considerations to be made for pedestrian accessibility, disabled access and active travel routes down Church St.

Headline Topic: Cycling on Pavements and Speeding in Parks

- **Responses:**

- Cllr Ehmann clarified that cycling on footways is an offence, to be addressed by the police. Speeding in parks falls outside the council's control.

Headline Topic: Improving Twickenham Station

- **Responses:**

- Cllr Baldwin highlighted the Community Rail Partnership for station beautification projects. Encouraged involvement in such initiatives.
- Cllr Neden-Watts expressed a desire for a more aesthetically pleasing station entrance and emphasized the importance of placemaking.

Headline Topic: Addressing Anti-Social Behaviour on Twickenham Green

- **Responses:**

- Cllr Neden-Watts recognized the issue of anti-social behaviour and emphasized a multi-agency approach involving collaboration between the council, police, and local businesses.
- Police Officer highlighted measures to manage gatherings and prevent anti-social behaviour, including patrols and diversion to youth centres. Encouraged reporting of incidents to the ward team.
- Cllr Rhi noted the impact of new lighting on Twickenham Green in deterring anti-social behaviour. Post Meeting comment by the Council: Officers are looking into the request for lighting, preparing a report for member consideration – should members wish to proceed the proposals will be subject to community consultation. Members have agreed to fund to initiative should it proceed
- Officers are looking into the request for lighting and how this would be provided, with proposals subject to consultation. Capital funding has been earmarked should a project proceed.

- **Headline Topic: Borough Promotion by Channel 4**

- **Responses:**

- Cllr Neden-Watts encouraged visibility of the borough for economic benefits, considering other areas beyond Twickenham and Richmond.
- Cllr Chard highlighted the success of festivals and plans to further promote the borough.

Headline Topic: Conclusion

- **Responses:**

- Cllr Neden-Watts expressed gratitude for attendance and participation in the meeting.

Close of Meeting